

FIT at Any Age

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Q & A

Q: One of your most recent roles is the voice of Wonder Woman's mother (Queen Hippolyta, in the brand-new animated DVD, "Wonder Woman," released in March, 2009). Now that's an impressive fitness model for women in their 40s! Any fitness tips from the land of the Amazons?

Yes! You are a goddess and you can do anything you set your mind to, because you are beautiful and you are needed. You will be called upon & be prepared. Be Wonder Woman. Be an Amazon.

Q: How do you personalize your fitness mantra?

I try and remember that I need to do this for my heart. I look at myself and say, "What kind of 60-year-old do I want to be?" That's a good one. I don't want to be old and sick. I don't want the body, mind and spirit to break down. The alternative is to be depressed and weak. I remind myself that I need to be strong. Lean and mean. Not skinny and feeble. Not bloated and tired. Here's a tip for women of ANY age & get up and do it! You can.

Q: What's your workout regimen?

I try and do a bit of everything and keep consistent. Being consistent is the key to success. I try and work out, or do something physically active, at least three times a week.

Q: What's your biggest challenge to staying in shape?

I have a natural desire to lie on the couch and I love to watch TV. Food and TV pair well. It's awful! Feet up, lounging. That's the life! Now that's the sound of the devil in my brain who lures me toward my ultimate demise! Death by pizza! I can see the mini-devil dancing on my grave.

Q: What motivates you to get off the couch and get moving?

I always need to be in shape because of my job. But I'm also motivated by my need to be happy and healthy. When I don't stay fit, I get miserable. I feel like I'm in a fog. I don't sleep well and I don't think well. I get moody and everyone around me suffers. I need to be there for myself and for my loved ones. I mean really, why wouldn't I keep fit? There's just no other alternative. Nothing else makes sense.

Q: A lot of people rely on a trainer for motivation. Do you?

Yes, I have an 80-year-old trainer named Joe Sancere. He trains me with weights in a gym. I also train with Mari Windsor for Pilates. My son makes me go to the gym when I get moody so he's kind of like a trainer as well!

Q: What advice would you give women who can't afford a trainer? What can they do?

You don't have to go to a gym. Years ago, I couldn't afford it, so I went hiking and walked the dogs and went to the beach and tried yoga at home and went rollerblading at the beach and swam as much as possible. Anything physical counts as a workout. You just find things that raise your heart rate. You've got to sweat.

Q: Has fitness always come naturally for you, or is it a struggle?

It's always a struggle for me& always! I WANT to lie around, mulling over all

Virginia Madsen



A cool, classic beauty, Virginia Madsen is one of Hollywood's most versatile actresses. Nominated for an Academy Award and a Golden Globe for her performance in the 2004 film "Sideways," this Independent Spirit Award-winning actress has an illustrious resume of roles alongside many of the most respected actors in the business. She stars opposite Hilary Swank and Richard Gere in Fox Searchlight's "Amelia," and also in "The Haunting in Connecticut," both set for release later this year.

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the problems of the world. But I instead, get up and fight. I have excellent genes, but genes have nothing to do with it if I mess it all up! My genes are strong and come from the Vikings and the native Americans. But I am ultimately responsible for how I care for myself. My genes dance for joy when I do. And a nice side effect of the dancing? My face is youthful and beautiful. You've got to be a good girl if you want to be a beautiful woman. I honor my ancestors when I care for myself.

Q: Speaking of genes, how does your mother influence your fitness regime?

My mother has always taken good care of herself. She never wore much makeup and was physically active. She still is! She works out and we walk together. We work together as well. She is my mentor and my hero. She is my inspiration. She taught me to always get up and try again. And she is never obsessed and afraid of the aging process. She is 75 and says she has never had a birthday that disappointed her. What a woman. I want to be a woman like that.

Q: What's the best advice she gave you regarding health and fitness?

She taught me to take care of myself and she taught me how to cook as well. She inspires me to be healthy at any age. I think my favorite lesson was getting up and having a good breakfast. I've passed that habit on to my son.

Q: What advice would you give to busy women and moms to get started on a healthy routine?

My advice is not to look in the mirror but to look at the kids. Don't you want to be the kind of mom who plays with her kids? Not the one who sits there watching. I wanted to participate! It's so much easier, really, and always more fun. Playing with your kids is a really fun way to work out. Don't go to the beach and sit on the sand. Jump in and laugh. Laughing burns calories! Even if you have to stay in, play 'Wii' with them...it's really fun! But most of all, easy does it. Give yourself long-term goals and stop punishing yourself. Go slow at the beginning. When I started taking care of myself, my goal was, "In a year and a half, I will feel remarkably better." That was it. A year and a half to feel remarkably better. Just like your kids, you have to take baby steps. It's unrealistic to think you will be skinny right after having a baby. That's not a goal, that's an abusive voice that should NOT be listened to ever! Take it easy and learn to love your body.

Q: And speaking of kids, how do you recommend they keep healthy?

Kids learn by example. They know what they see. They watch everything you do and then they do it. If they see you sad and eating fast food, they will not only think that's normal, which it isn't, but they will do it when they are teenagers and the result is painful and hard to change. I love to cook with my son and we always sit down for dinner. When you eat together, you're not just spending time together, you're teaching them how to take care of themselves. Fast food is poison. Home cooked meals are pure love. Soda is not love. Why fill your children with carbonation and chemicals? Water is clean and good. And remember that in all decisions, you are the adult and what you say goes.

Q: Let's talk about some favorites: power snack?

Chicken breast and cottage cheese. Chopped salad or a protein shake. Even though I really want a bag of chips.

Q: Favorite healthy food?

Stir-fried veggies with olive oil and black sesame seeds and hot red pepper and

soy sauce makes it luscious. You can add chicken or shrimp too. It takes about 10 minutes to make. That's faster than driving to a burger joint. Your tummy will thank you.

Q: Indulgence food?

Pasta! Baked potatoes. Pizza. Cheese. Toast. Chips. And really, anything late at night. It's so bad for me to eat late but I do it now and again and go to sleep with a big, full belly. I then roll around having bad dreams and feel terrible in the morning. Nice going, V! That little devil I spoke of earlier? He's smiling, giggling at having won. He's an evil little troll so I smash him against the wall when I go to the gym. He especially hates when I go to a spin class.

Q: Favorite iPod tunes for working out?

I like Donna Summer and Parliament. "Back in Black" by AC/DC is a great song for spinning. Aerosmith is always an eye-opener. Especially when there's a real steroid-using meathead strutting around the gym to my soundtrack of "Dude Looks Like a Lay-day."

Q: Finally, how about a personal story about your health/fitness journey that will inspire women in your age group?

I learned to ski when I was around 38. It's an especially good sport for women over 35 because it plays on all our fears. I had to dare. I had to learn to be brave. If you can let gravity take you and lean into a run down a mountain, let go and fly, you can do anything and face anyone. I think it's an incredible achievement to learn a new sport when you're older because it wakes you up inside. Your heart blooms and your mind expands. And what about that little devil who tempts me into no-good? He's gone. I left him at the bottom of the mountain the day I learned how to ski. I left him at the barn when I learned how to ride a horse. He stayed at the bottom of the sea when I learned how to scuba dive. He gets trampled under foot when I go walking with my dogs. He's under the wheel of my car when I go to my yoga class. He is banned from my kingdom.

By the way, he was last seen on a cruise ship, basking in the glow of an all-you-can-eat buffet.

Cheers!



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